

The Articles of
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~~Are You a Good Tree or a Bad Tree?~~

In Hades, there was a large field with a fence down the middle. There were people on both sides, but the majority were sitting on the fence. Jesus and Satan came to either side and beckoned the people on their respective sides to follow them. When the people on the fence started to follow Jesus, Satan said, "Where do you think you are going? You had your chance to follow Jesus when you were on earth. Did you not know? I own the fence too. Come with me."

The people on Christ's side are those who follow His word and try to keep themselves as far away from temptation as possible. Those on Satan's side are those who chose to let temptation rule their lives. They never fixed the problem. The individuals on the fence are those who tried to put a limit on how far they could go without sinning. They thought they had chosen Christ's side, but they were going to see how close they could get to Satan's side. That is a terrible position to be in. By doing this, you have allowed yourself to be put in harm's way and be enticed. James 1:14 says "But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed." James goes on to illustrate the chain reaction that happens due to us becoming enticed. Verse 15 states, "Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full grown, brings forth death."

We must avoid temptation with all our might. To do this, we must stay in the light. In James 1:17, the text clearly says that God is the "Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning." With God, there is not even a shadow. First John 1:5 says, "This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in him is no darkness at all." Riding the fence like those in the story is just like standing in the shadows. We cannot do that. If we do not want to sin, we must stay as far away from it as possible, like those on Christ's side of the fence. If you do not want to sin, abhor things that entice you. First Thessalonians 5:22 puts it simply: "Abstain from every form of evil." *EVERY FORM OF EVIL*. When you are in the shadows, you might as well just be in the dark. You will most likely end up there one way or another.

Think of yourself as a tree. In Matthew 7:16-17, Jesus says, "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but bad trees bear bad fruit." If you are in the shadows, do you think you are a good tree or a bad tree? We all know that trees need light. We need light which is God. What better way to live and grow than to not be hidden from the light at all; to not be hidden from God in any way. If you are in the shadows, you are depriving yourself of light. Like the tree, you will die. You are not keeping your mind on godly things.

Slowly but surely you will become desensitized to the light and try to avoid it altogether, going further and further into the darkness. One cannot "gather grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles." Those in the darkness do not do good deeds. Therefore, do

you wish to be cast into the fire as Matthew 7:19 says you will be? Because if you choose this path, that is what will happen. Are you a thorn bush? Are you beginning to shy away from the light? You can combat this! Get help now before it's too late! We're not guaranteed any amount of time. You could die before you finish reading this. Luke 12:40 says, "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." Think of how many people you know who have died unexpectedly. Do not think you are any different? Listen to the tiny voice in your head you keep ignoring. It is only trying to prevent your spiritual death. Train your conscience right. Stay in the light.

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